

Title:	HABITAT USE AND DISTRIBUTION ECOLOGY OF BOTTLENOSE DOLPHINS.
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Project Summary:	Over the past several decades, the waters of Florida Bay have undergone dramatic changes, resulting in alterations of physical parameters such as salinity and turbidity, and biotic parameters including seagrass coverage and the composition of fish assemblages. Currently, Florida Bay is the terminus of a massive ecosystem restoration project to improve water quality, quantity, timing, and distribution in the South Florida ecosystem; much of the water that flows through the Everglades empties in to Florida Bay, a biologically diverse and unique ecosystem. Managers and stake holders are interested in determining the impact of this restoration project on Florida Bay. Bottlenose dolphins may act as an indicator species of habitat quality in this area, as their patterns of distribution reflect variation in various environmental parameters.
Relevance to Restoration and/or Resource Management:	A better understanding of the essential habitat types and qualities needed by both bottlenose dolphins and their prey could allow managers to use bottlenose dolphins as indicator species of habitat quality - a parameter that could be affected by upstream restoration activities.
Geographic Area:	Florida Bay.